

Understanding the Level of Knowledge and Attitudes of Pregnant Women on Use of Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM)

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Abstract

Background: The utilization of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) among pregnant women in India is on the rise. Though the pregnant women are using these therapies, they lack adequate knowledge. It is the responsibility of the health care provider to identify the knowledge to promote healthy practices and to avoid harmful practices. **Method:** For this investigation, a quantitative method was used. The level of knowledge and attitude of pregnant women regarding the use of complementary and alternative medicines was investigated using a non-experimental, exploratory research methodology. In the antenatal OPD of the IMS & SUM Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, the study was carried out. The tools used for the study were 1. Demographic questionnaire, 2. Knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge on CAM, 3. Attitude scale to assess the attitude of women towards the CAM. Data were gathered through interviews. Each expectant lady gave informed written consent prior to the data collection. SPSS 20 was used to enter and analyse the data. **Results:** Highest percentage of the women had very good knowledge (64%) and scored between 16-20. More than half of the women (58%) had neutral attitude and scored between 16-30. Significantly favourable link between pregnant women's attitudes and knowledge of complementary and alternative medicine was discovered ($r=0.72$, $p=0.04$). **Conclusion:** Pregnant women are increasingly turning to complementary and alternative treatment. Therefore, it is crucial that healthcare professionals often inquire about CAM use during pregnancy and offer pertinent guidance on CAM use.

Keywords: Knowledge, Attitude, Pregnant women, Complementary and Alternative Medicine.

INTRODUCTION

Public acceptance of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is growing. A wide range of prescription drugs, theories, methods, and exercises known as complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) have the potential to enhance general health [1].

Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) includes more than a hundred therapeutic methods that fall outside the scope of traditional medicine. Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) is a broad category of healthcare practises that are not a tradition or a component of the established healthcare system, according to the World Health Organisation [2].

Pregnant women in several nations are increasingly using complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). Nutritional supplements, herbal medicine, relaxation techniques and aromatherapy

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being the most used modalities [3]. Traditional medical systems, modern medical systems, and mind-body practises are three major categories for CAM practices. Acupuncture, Acupressure, Guided Imagery, Hypnosis, Massage, Meditation, Reflexology, Structural Integration, Spinal Manipulation, Tai Chi, Therapeutic Touch and Yoga are the mind body practices.

Ayurveda, Curanderismo, Native American Medicine, Siddha, Tibetan Medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Unani were the traditional medical system. Anthropozoic medicine, Chiropractic, Homeopathy, Naturopathy and Osteopathy are the model medical system includes. Combining alternative and traditional care is known as integrative medicine (or integrative health) [4].

According to the Rao A et al reasonable cost, less side effects, easy accessibility, self-help approach, less invasive techniques, quick results, spirituality and emotional wellbeing were the important reason for the participants to use the complementary and alternative medicine [5].

Worldwide, there has been a significant rise in the use of complementary and alternative medicine. Herbal medicine is the most popular one used by different populations including pregnant women. The usage of CAM during pregnancy varies widely among women to women and region to region and estimated as low as 1% and as high as 87%. Studies conducted in various countries shown that Ginger, Berries, Chamomile, turmeric were the most commonly used herbs during pregnancy [6].

Though the pregnant women have positive attitude towards the complementary and alternative medicine practices, most of the women do not inform their healthcare providers. Due to the fact that the majority of pregnant women rely heavily on their family and friends for information on complementary and alternative medicine [7].

Many pregnant women seeking complementary and alternative medicine for their pregnancy related minor disorders such as nausea, vomiting, urinary tract infections, fatigue, leg cramps and backache. Though many women using Complementary and Alternative (CAM), they lack adequate knowledge related to about it [8].

Acupuncture, aromatherapy, herbal and homeopathy, meditation, prenatal yoga, movement therapies, chiropractic and osteopathic manipulation are emerging Complementary and Alternative medicine during pregnancy in India. Though the pregnant women are using these therapies, they lack adequate knowledge. Thus, the investigator done this study to assess the knowledge and attitude on Use of Complementary and Alternative Therapies during pregnancy.

Methods

For this investigation, a quantitative method was used. The level of knowledge and attitude of pregnant women regarding the use of complementary and alternative medicines was investigated using a non-experimental, exploratory research methodology. In the antenatal OPD of the IMS & SUM Hospital in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, the study was carried out. The study's major goals were to evaluate pregnant women's knowledge about CAM, attitudes towards it, and the relationship between knowledge and attitudes. The study comprised pregnant patients at antenatal OPD who could participate in data collection and knew and could communicate in Odia.

Women who were pregnant at high risk and refused to participate in the trial were eliminated. The tools used for the study were 1. Demographic questionnaire, 2. Knowledge questionnaire to assess the knowledge on CAM, 3.

Attitude scale to assess the attitude of women towards the CAM. Five points Likert Scale was used. Interview method was used to collect the data. Informed written consent was taken from each participant before collecting the data. SPSS 20 was used to enter and analyse the data.

RESULT

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of pregnant women i.e Highest percentage (48%) of women belongs to the age group of 21-25 years. Highest percentage of the women had secondary and higher secondary education (60%) and working (84%). Most (90%) of the women were Hindu and highest percentage of the women (58%) residing in rural area. Most of the women (96%) were in the third trimester. All women (100%) were have information about CAM and their source of information were relatives (44%), friends (28%), medical professional (16%) and others (12%).

Table 1. Distribution of pregnant women according to their demographic characteristics. n = 50

| S. N. | Variables | F | % |
|-------|--------------------------------|----|-----|
| 1 | Age in years | | |
| | <20 | 04 | 08 |
| | 21-25 | 24 | 48 |
| | 26-30 | 22 | 44 |
| 2 | Gravida | | |
| | Primi | 37 | 74 |
| | Multi | 12 | 24 |
| | Grand Multi | 01 | 02 |
| 3 | Education | | |
| | Primary | 08 | 16 |
| | Secondary and Higher secondary | 30 | 60 |
| | Graduate and above | 12 | 24 |
| 4 | Occupation | | |
| | Housewife | 08 | 16 |
| | Working | 42 | 84 |
| 5 | Religion | | |
| | Hindu | 47 | 94 |
| | Muslim | 2 | 4 |
| | Christian | 1 | 2 |
| 6 | Residence | | |
| | Urban | 21 | 42 |
| | Rural | 29 | 58 |
| 7 | Gestational Period | | |
| | 1 st Trimester | 02 | 04 |
| | 3 rd Trimester | 48 | 96 |
| 8 | Information about CAM | | |
| | Yes | 50 | 100 |
| | No | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Source of information | | |
| | Relatives | 22 | 44 |
| | Friends | 14 | 28 |
| | Medical professional | 08 | 16 |
| | Others | 06 | 12 |

Table 2. Level of knowledge of pregnant women on CAM during pregnancy.

n = 50

| S. N. | Knowledge Score | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | Poor (0-5) | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | Average (6-10) | 4 | 8 |
| 3 | Good (11-15) | 14 | 28 |
| 4 | Very Good (16-20) | 32 | 64 |

Table No. 2 displays the degree to which pregnant women are knowledgeable of CAM throughout pregnancy. Highest percentage (64%) of the women had very good knowledge and scored between 16-20, followed by 28% of women had good knowledge and scored between 11-15. And only 08% of the women had average knowledge and scored between 6-10 whereas no one had poor knowledge. It can be interpreted that majority of the women had very good knowledge and they know very well about Complementary and alternative therapies.

Table 3. Attitude of pregnant women on CAM during pregnancy.

n = 50

| S. N. | Attitude Score | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|------------------|-----------|----------------|
| 1 | Positive (31-45) | 20 | 40 |
| 2 | Neutral (16-30) | 29 | 58 |
| 3 | Negative (1-15) | 01 | 02 |

Table No 3 shows the attitude of pregnant women on CAM during pregnancy. The attitude of the women was measured by self-structured attitude scale and the score interpretation was higher the score more positive attitude. Highest percentage (58%) of the women had neutral attitude and scored between 16-30, followed by 40% of women had positive attitude and scored between 31-45. Whereas only one woman had negative attitude and scored between (1-15). It can be interpreted that the pregnant women had neutral attitude toward CAM and proper education about the importance in necessary to make the women to get benefit from CAM.

Table 4. Correlation between Knowledge and attitude of pregnant women on CAM during pregnancy.

| Variable | R value | P value |
|-----------|---------|---------|
| Knowledge | | |
| Attitude | 0.72 | 0.046 |

The association between pregnant women's knowledge and attitude scores is shown in Table No. 4. The correlation r value is 0.72 and indicate positive correlation. The p-value is 0.046 which is < 0.05. So, it can be interpreted that increase knowledge on CAM leads to more positive attitude toward the use of CAM.

Association between the level of knowledge and selected demographic Variables

To determine the relationship between the amount of knowledge and particular demographic factors, the chi-square test was computed. There was no significant association found between level of perceived stress and age ($\chi = 1.36$, $p = 0.505$), gravida ($\chi = 1.53$, $p = 0.216$), education ($\chi = 1.43$, $p = 0.490$), occupation ($\chi = 0.262$, $p = 0.609$) and residence ($\chi = 1.94$, $p = 0.163$).

Association between the attitude score and selected demographic Variables

To determine the relationship between the attitude score and particular demographic variables, the chi-square test was performed. There was no significant association found between attitude and age (χ

= 6.02, $p = 0.490$), gravida ($\chi = 1.95$, $p = 0.162$), education ($\chi = 1.76$, $p = 0.415$). Occupation ($\chi = 0.262$, $p = 0.609$) and residence ($\chi = 6.52$, $p = 0.010$) found to be associated with attitude. Hence it can be interpreted that working women and women residing in urban area have positive attitude towards the use of CAM as compared to their counterparts.

DISCUSSION

In the present study, highest percentage of women belongs to the age group of 21-25 years and most of them working. Hwang JH et al stated in his study that the mean age of the participants was 26.1 ± 6.9 , 74.6 % were aged ≤ 30 years and most of them (89.3 %) were housewife [9].

The majority of the women in the survey had excellent knowledge of and an unfavourable attitude towards using complementary and alternative therapies while pregnant. Al-Eidi S et al stated in his study that though the pregnant women have positive attitude towards the complementary and alternative medicine practices, most of the women do not inform their healthcare providers. Due to the fact that the majority of pregnant women rely heavily on their family and friends for information on complementary and alternative medicine [7].

Rebekah L et al conducted a survey in Australia that found that majority (73%) of women having positive attitude towards the CAM while 37% consulted a CAM practitioner throughout their pregnancy [10]. Quzmar, Y et al stated that majority (65.3%) of the pregnant women were using CAM and they believed that CAM was not harmful to them or their babies. Most of the information that pregnant women had about CAM came from their family and friends. Approximately two-thirds of participants thought that health care providers shall advise about commonly used CAM [11].

CONCLUSION

This study found that still women are lacking proper knowledge and attitude about CAM. Many CAM therapies have benefit for the pregnant women. Therefore, it is crucial that health care professionals routinely inquire about CAM use during pregnancy and offer pregnant women pertinent advice on the subject. Healthcare providers need to possess adequate knowledge regarding the prevalent complementary and alternative medicines (CAMs) utilized by women, along with a comprehensive understanding of their associated risks and benefits.

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